



TE KĀHUI WHAKAMANA
RUA TEKAU MĀ IWA
PIKE RIVER
RECOVERY AGENCY

26 April 2019

Rt Hon Winston Peters
New Zealand First Leader
Parliament Buildings
WELLINGTON

Dear Mr Peters

Thank you for your letter of 18 April 2019 in which you conveyed a formal request to accompany the party of those scheduled to carry out the initial re-entry of the Pike River mine drift on 3 May 2019.

I acknowledge the strength and consistency of your support for re-entry to occur and your desire to be a member of the initial re-entry team. As the Chief Executive of the Agency, however, there are a number of factors I have to consider in deciding on the composition of the party that will carry out this task.

Commitment to the health and safety of everyone involved is a fundamental value of the Agency and is central to everything we plan and do.

This would be so even without the legal obligations (and the legal liability) that I have as Chief Executive of the Agency, and that the Chief Operating Officer of the Agency (who is also the designated Mine Manager and Senior Site Executive for the Pike River mine) have under relevant legislation.

The area of the drift that the team is scheduled to enter on 3 May has not been secured, examined or recovered since it was last occupied more than 2 years ago. There will be no risk of explosion – the composition of the atmosphere in the area to be entered makes this impossible. But there are multiple other hazards to be managed.

In the view of the Chief Operating Officer and myself the initial team must clearly consist of a minimum safe number of specialised staff – all with specific, complementary and clearly understood roles and responsibilities. Each of the team needs to have wide, deep and current experience in relevant aspects of underground coal mining. All of them need to have been closely involved in planning and preparation for the activity over recent months, and to be closely familiar with the specific conditions they will encounter.

I must therefore decline your request.

Yours sincerely

Dave Gawn
Chief Executive

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